

# Essay

- Each instructor develops her or his own assignments. Your instructor and the assignment sheet s/he has provided are the two best sources for guidance as you work toward a final draft. The handouts/tutorials for the types of essays feature general guidelines to help you write solid essays, but they should be treated only as supplements to your instructor and the assignment sheet.

## Purpose

- Explain, describe, define, and inform your audience about your subject..

## Topic

- Something you know a great deal about.

Example: *In high school, Sara played basketball. She knows a lot about it.*

- Narrow that topic down so you can talk about a certain aspect of it thoroughly.

Example: *Basketball is a big topic. Sara will go with positions on the court.*

- Decide what “subtopics” you will need to explain.

Example: *Notice that “positions on the court” gives Sara a number of subtopics, or body paragraphs. She will need five body paragraphs, one for each position.*

## Thesis

- For this paper, your thesis statement will probably be a summary of the information you will provide.

Example: *There are five positions in basketball, each performing certain tasks on the team: \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_.*

## Audience

- It is crucial to consider how much your audience does or does not already know about your topic. Decide for whom you are writing the essay and how familiar they are with the topic?

Example: *Sara’s readers do not know anything about basketball positions, but they know that players try to put the ball in the basket on offense.*

- What do they need to know to understand the topic?

Example: *They do not need to know what a ball looks like, but they will need to know where each position tends to stand on offense and what they tend to do.*

- Keep these questions in mind so that you consistently address the same audience.

Example: *Sara would not want to decide her audience is totally ignorant of basketball positions and then throw out something like “Some forwards play point forward” without explaining what “point forward” means.*

## Structure

Break your topic down into its parts and c m a y

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